

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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1975 INFORMATION PROGRAMME

"In view of the danger facing the world, the Commission is convinced that there is no salvation for Europe outside Europe", declared President Ortolí at his Press Conference of 10 January 1975, and he added: "in face of a new situation, a new attitude must be adopted". The emphasis placed on this occasion on the Commission's political role must also be reflected in information matters.

The recent Paris Summit cleared a number of obstacles from our path and should enable a new start to be made for Europe. A great deal becomes possible again, yet nothing has been definitely gained. Public opinion, cheated on a number of occasions, is now waiting for Governments and Institutions to act, i.e. to put into practice common policies which clearly show that we do have a true European Community, not just a Common Market. Public opinion will indeed judge the Community by its ability to be, to act and to react on a stage that is increasingly assuming world-wide dimensions.

The Committee, for its part must rely more than in the past on that same public opinion and must meet it by explaining its purpose, informing it and associating it with its efforts.

To this end, the Commission must greatly reshape its information policy in order better to inform the Europeans of the extent to which its actions concern them directly in their daily lives. The manner in which this is done must be more simple, more alive and more concrete. This leaning towards the public at large will have to be completed by having greater recourse to outside movements and associations that are likely to take over some of these tasks.

It so happens that the additional means placed at the Commission's disposal on the initiative of the European Parliament will, this year (1), make it possible better to face the new tasks at hand, the main aim being to provide European opinion with information that is as understandable and complete as possible.

(1) The present document constitutes an additional part of the Information Programme (SEC(73) 4660 final) adopted by the Commission for a period of two years, namely 1974/1975.

I. INFORMATION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The difficulties which the Community is still passing through should serve to confirm the priority given to Member States over non-Member States as far as information is concerned.

1. Themes

The themes to be dealt with in 1975 will mainly depend on the implementation of the Commission's new policy and of the Commission's desire to have a deeper dialogue with the public at large as well as with the Community's Institutions.

The information policy must concentrate on a number of fundamental, simple and concrete facts:

- (i) Europe - for whom? for all its citizens,
- (ii) Europe - why? as one of the factors for solving the economic crises (combatting inflation and unemployment, regional policy, first practical results of a restimulation of the economic and monetary union, etc.) and to give it once again its proper place and role in the world (independence of Europe and energy policy, development policy, etc.),
- (iii) Europe - how? as a result of more efficient and democratic institutions (move towards European Union, election to the European Parliament by universal suffrage).

These particular themes, as well as others which will come into being with the development of the Commission's programme to be presented to the European Parliament of 13 February, will thus be able to take shape around a few main idées-force supported by a solidarity which will gradually and more forcibly have to be turned into action if they are to have any credibility.

The 25th anniversary of the Robert Schuman Declaration will constitute an excellent opportunity to recall Community achievements and to mobilize the political forces and public opinion in favour of a rebirth of the European idea.

Furthermore, on the occasion of "Women's Year", certain information actions must be undertaken to emphasize the role which the European Community can play in improving conditions for women.

2. The circles to be reached

Europe cannot be built without its citizens. Therefore, it will not be built in ignorance or indifference. Thus, the Commission will increase its action vis-à-vis the public which, up till now, had not been concerned with European construction.

Apart from this overall concern, the circles to be given priority remain the trade unions, young people, teachers and politicians, to which should be added the consumers (through their various organizations).

Trade unions

Two main guidelines must be stressed : firstly an increase in the funds made available to the offices to allow them to step up their activities in the provision of trade union information, and secondly the development of activities aimed at schools, in particular the training of leaders to use the audio-visual material available at present for this purpose.

Young people

The main aims will be to expand and intensify contacts and cooperation with youth organisations at both Community and national level, to supply them with information suitable to their needs and thus stimulate their interest in the Community problems.

Ultimate establishment of the "Youth Forum" should give fresh impetus to the Commission's information policy in this direction.

To reach young people who are not members of any organisation, greater efforts will be made through press, radio and television. In particular, the experiment at present going on in Germany, where a special newsletter is now circulated to young peoples' magazines of different trends, will be extended to other Member States.

Teachers

The main task here is to supply teachers, in cooperation with the appropriate organizations, with suitably adapted information material which they can make use of; it is also to assist them in promoting the study of subjects concerning the Community and to supply them with regular information on the Community education policy.

In universities, efforts should be concentrated on young lecturers.

Finally, as permanent education and refresher courses are being extended in most Member States for the education and re-education of adults, a special effort should forthwith be made in this field.

Political circles

In order to strengthen Commission information activities in this particularly important sector, offices in capital cities must be asked to examine the present position as regard information sent to Members of national Parliaments, regional assemblies and party political organisations. They will also be asked to study with those concerned the possibility of organising meetings on specific topics, study sessions or any other action likely to increase knowledge of Community problems in these circles.

A special effort will also be made to reach political youth movements.

Consumers

A considerable effort has already been made here ,especially vis-a-vis the specialised press , radio and television.

It will have to be supplemented by more systematic action aimed at consumer organisations themselves.

3. Media

The Commission recognises indeed that an effective utilization of the information media depends firstly on the smooth functioning of its own departments. Studies are being made to improve the organization of the DG Information with particular reference to greater flexibility, and to achieve closer cooperation between this DG and the Spokesman's Group as well as between it and the other Directorates-General. Measures have already been taken to ensure a better presentation of proposals concerning the Commission's policies and to give more publicity to the Commission's role in drawing up the Community's decisions. Finally, efforts will be made to provide Press and Information Offices in the various capitals with the resources necessary to enable them to meet the requests sent to them by the public at large in the Member States.

With this in mind, efforts to penetrate the external media (press, radio, television, including popular periodicals, the specialized and regional press) will be considerably increased, particularly with a view to making the make in the street more aware of how the activities of the European Community directly affect his daily life. The features service has prepared more lively and attractive information specially for this purpose. The Press and Information Offices, which form the main sources of this operation, are at present organizing themselves to meet the new demand, particularly as regards the regional press.

Generally speaking, and in view of the increasing importance of audiovisual means and of their impact on public opinion, the Commission intends to make greater use of them.

The Commission has reaffirmed the major importance of television as a means of information in particular by its decision to equip its studios with production and video-recording in colour facilities which could be used to broadcast to the various television stations via the transmitters of the BRT/RTB: this equipment should become operational in the middle of this year and considerably increase Community news broadcasts within the Member States.

A study is to be undertaken of the present and future requirements of television stations in both news items and of the magazine type broadcasts.

The Commission's departments will also try to establish closer cooperation with the television networks, both through their Brussels correspondents and through the central agencies in Member States. This should make it possible to promote more broadcasts on Community subjects in the various networks, particularly by increasing the number of coproductions with the stations, or by supplying them with filmed material on subjects concerning the Community.

In addition, a survey is to be undertaken of the increasingly important video-cassette market and of the best way of including Community subjects.

The radio must also be considered as a news medium of primary importance for covering Community questions. Further steps were therefore taken in 1974 to establish relations with radio stations, at regional and local level in particular. An experimental monthly information bulletin in English, "Euradio", was thus set up. These efforts will be continued and expanded in 1975 and extended to the other languages.

A new film digest dealing with the European Community, and produced by the Commission, will be brought out this year. It will be used mainly as a general introductory film for groups of visitors to Brussels and Luxembourg and for the Press and Information Offices in Community countries.

In addition, steps will be taken to encourage coproductions in cooperation with outside firms in order that the commercial circuit may be reached.

Publications

As indicated in the last programme, publications continue to play a vital role, chiefly for reaching opinion leaders and disseminators. However, the proportion of the budget devoted to publications will be reduced.

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Several, economy measures have already been taken, in particular, transformation of the quarterly dossiers "Documentation Européenne" into a number of booklets, each dealing with a single subject, allowing them to be used simultaneously as separate brochures. The cost of the monthly magazines has been assessed and has thrown some light on how to keep up regular publication while keeping down budget charges.

In other cases recourse will be had to the most economic forms of production, especially the "dossier." These will continue to be produced by the offices in agreement and in cooperation with central departments.

Visits

The greater selectivity and better preparation for all visits, including those by specialist groups (farmers, students, young people, etc.), which was begun in 1974, will continue.

Exhibitions

Greater priority must be given to itinerant exhibitions, in order to bring information at regional level to the general public. It may be possible to use external organizations for their management.

Participation in external exhibitions should depend on whether the necessary follow-up will be economically possible.

In addition, a certain amount of attention should continue to be paid to large international and world exhibitions, which offer a splendid opportunity to emphasize the identity of the European Community: this will be the case with the Okinawa International Exhibition which is to take place this year on the theme "The sea we will like to see" ; the Commission shall present a Community pavilion which is all the more important since the great majority of the Member States will not be represented individually.

II. INFORMATION IN NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

New tasks will have to be undertaken in this area to cope with new requirements in several parts of the world and, since additional appropriations are available, it will be possible to achieve at least some of the aims.

Generally speaking, action to be carried out in non-Member countries is very diversified both as regards themes dealt with and circles to be reached, and means utilized.

The themes relate mainly to the policy applied by the Community to the various countries concerned (trade agreement or association agreement for example), and to the impact of its internal policy on these countries (such as agricultural policy, environment policy or social policy). To these must of course be added the important international questions such as monetary problems or the liberalization of trade.

As regards the circles to be reached, these consist mainly in leaders in the political, economic and social spheres (politicians and senior officials, leaders in industry and trade, trade unionists, students).

In view of these characteristics, the means to be used must mainly be based on direct contact (individual and collective visits, conferences and symposia) and completed by as regular as possible an action vis-à-vis the press.

1. ACP countries

As far as information within the Community is concerned, the main step should be to encourage activity in cooperation with non-governmental organizations which aim mainly at getting public opinion to take greater interest in the problems of development aid, which should increasingly become a major and dynamic theme of the Community.

Surveys are at present being carried out to draw up a list of these organizations in all Member States, as has already been done in France, where the study has already led to an increased awareness of the action of the European Community in this field.

As regards information in the ACP countries

1 In view of the conclusion of the negotiations the main aim is to set up a regular information network similar to that for the Yaoundi Convention, using the press and radio, and later television. Contacts for this purpose with English-speaking African States among others will be considerably increased, so that a more solid armature will already be available in the course of 1975. The appropriations necessary for that purpose have been set free. A special effort will also be needed to involve the universities, in particular.

2. Other non-member countries

Relations between the Community and other non-member countries have developed quite appreciably over the past year. The increase in requests for information from Mediterranean non-member countries in particular has notably increased recently.

Changes of government in Portugal and Greece, coupled with the fact that the Community has worked out an overall approach to relations with all the countries in this geographical area, have reversed the political situation which in the past conditioned the Community's attitude to these countries, and have consequently altered its future information policy in this region.

The Commission now has a Press and Information Office in Turkey. The infrastructure of this office on the spot will make possible a noteworthy development of the effort to provide information in this associated country.

At the end of the process of normalization of political relations between the Community and Greece a Press and Information Office will be created in Athens endowed with an appropriate infrastructure as regards personnel and technical resources.

The change of regime in Portugal has meant that the Community is called on to make a serious effort to supply information to this country, and this may well be extended as a result of current political and economic developments.

In view of the increased interest shown by the Arab countries, measures are already under way to provide them with regular information.

The United States will still be one of the leading non-member States covered by the Commission's information campaign (dealing, at a political level, with relations between the USA and Europe, energy problems, relations with the Third World, new trade negotiations, etc. ...) The programme for American holders of grants, which is being run jointly by the European Parliament and the Commission, will supplement and intensify the information campaign in this country.

Similarly, an information programme has been planned for 1975 for Japan, where a Press and Information service will shortly come into operation within the Delegation which has recently been set up. A Press and Information service will also be created in Canada with the establishment of a Delegation in Ottawa. Canadian nationals might also benefit under the Community grant programme.

Action will be taken to increase information in Latin America and to launch an information service in Asia.

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Overall view of 1974

It is advisable first to recall how the fundamental elements defined when the ^{two-year} programme for 1974/75 was drawn up, and which remain basic to the organization of the Commission's information policy, have been applied:

- The regular cooperation and complementary action with the Spokesman, which have been extended and clarified since 26 September 1973, when the Commission adopted decisions on the reorganization of the Directorate-General for Information and defined the mandate of the Spokesman and the methods of cooperation between the two departments.
- Cooperation with the Directorates-General, in particular by means of inter-departmental information groups. Such groups have been set up with certain Directorates-General and their task is to define, prepare and implement the appropriate actions to provide information.
- Decentralization of information both at office level by adapting to the various national situations and at peripheral level by intensifying the dissemination of information within the regional framework. This line of approach, which was introduced last year will become fully effective only when the necessary operational resources (staff especially) can actually be made available to the information offices.
- Cooperation with the information services of the other Community institutions and of the Member States.
- Necessity of using the development of public opinion more regularly as a basis for working out our information programmes. From this angle, full use has been made of the opinion poll carried out by the Commission under the title "Europe seen by the Europeans". In addition, two "barometer polls" concerning a small number of questions were carried out in 1974; the first was published in July and the second in December.

On the other hand, the programme had to be amended during the financial year, in particular by reducing the priorities given to certain subjects, such as economic and monetary union and regional policy, and by increasing the possibility of action in certain Member States.

Because of the fluid situation, frequent meetings had also to be organized with Press and Information Offices and Central Divisions (both jointly and singly), and an administrative system for the budget programme which would allow regular and rapid adaptation of the resources available had to be set up more quickly.

Political developments also revealed the need for the Community to show its "human face" by supplying simpler, livelier and more concrete information in order to give the people of the Community a better idea, chiefly via the mass media, of Community activities which affect their daily lives.

One of the first measures taken was the creation of a feature service, to prepare in popular form subjects chosen regularly with this in mind. For the same reason, it appeared even more necessary to strengthen the activities aimed at the audio-visual media, especially television and radio. As regards this latter point, the Commission recently gave its agreement for the acquisition of a first set of equipment (video-recording) with which it will be possible to make colour recordings for television.

As far as journalists are concerned, the Commission has tried to improve the information supplied to the press, and to radio and television news services, not only in Brussels, where the Spokesman's activities have been on the increase (some 280 accredited and numerous visiting journalists), but also outside Brussels.

In addition to the above effort, the Directorate-General for Information, working in liaison with the Press and Information Offices, has undertaken an in-depth action aimed at the regional press and the specialist press.

Furthermore, an initial attempt, in several countries, to interest popular periodicals and women's journals in Community activities was very favourably received. Therefore, this type of action will be continued and extended. In addition, detailed seminars have been organized in Brussels for final-year students from schools and institutes of journalism and for young journalists from non-member countries, so as to promote better understanding of the problems and realities of the European Community.

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